

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6949

S E C R E T BUENOS AIRES 5756

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: SITUATION OF UCR LEGISLATORS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 5685 AND PREVIOUS

1. SOLARI IRIGOYEN AND AMAYA WERE TAKEN TO 5TH CORPS HEADQUARTERS IN BAHIA BLANCA FOLLOWING THEIR "RELEASE" BY UNKNOWN CAPTORS IN RIO NEGRO ON AUG 30. SINCE THEN, THEY HAVE REMAINED AT 5TH CORPS WHILE BEING INTERROGATED CONCERNING THEIR RECENT DISAPPEARANCE. UCR REP HAS SEEN TWO MEN AND CONFIRMS THAT THEY ARE IN REASONABLY GOOD HEALTH, THOUGH SUFFERING FROM "NERVOUS DEPRESSION" AS RESULT OF THEIR ORDEAL. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, TWO MEN WERE KEPT BLINDFOLDED AND CHAINED TO METAL COTS DURING MOST OF THEIR CAPTIVITY. THEY INDICATED SEVERAL DAYS HAD PASSED BEFORE THEY AWARE OF ONE ANOTHER'S PRESENCE. THEY FURTHER INDICATED THERE WERE OTHERS BEING HELD IN SAME ROOM UNDER SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES.

2. EMBOFF LAST NIGHT SAW GROUP OF SOLARI IRIGOYEN'S CLOSEST FRIENDS IN UCR WHO SAID SITUATION OF THEIR TWO COLLEGAGUES REMAINS UNCERTAIN. SO FAR, TWO ARE SIMPLY BEING INTERROGATED, BUT FRIENDS HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THEY MAY RPT MAY SHORTLY BE PLACED UNDER ARREST AND INVESTIGATED FOR INVOLVEMENT WITH SUBVERSIVE GROUPS. EVEN IF THIS TURNS OUT TO BE CASE, HOWEVER, FRIENDS PROFESS THEMSELVES REASSURED CONCERNING SAFETY OF TWO MEN AND EVENTUALLY SATISFACTORY OUTCOME OF CASE. AS ONE FRIEND PUT IT: "EVEN IF THEY ARE PLACED UNDER ARREST, IT WILL BE LEGAL DETENTION AND

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WE CAN EXPECT THEY WILL BE TREATED PROPERLY AND CASE

HANDLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAW. FACT THEY NO LONGER
'CLANDESTINELY DETAINED' MEANS THEY AREN'T GOING TO BE
MURDERED. FURTHER, SINCE WE CERTAIN NEITHER MAN GUILTY
OF ANY SUBVERSIVE CONNECTIONS, WE ARE SURE THAT PROPERLY
CONDUCTED INVESTIGATION WILL CLEAR THEM."

3. LEADERS OF ALFONSINISTA WING OF UCR MET LAST NIGHT AND
AGREED TO APPROACH PARTY LEADER BALBIN TODAY IN ORDER TO
REQUEST THAT STATEMENT BE ISSUED IN NAME OF UCR VOICING FULL
SUPPORT FOR TWO DETAINED COLLEAGUES AND THAT PARTY'S LEGAL
REPRESENTATIVE BE ASSIGNED AS THEIR DEFENSE ATTORNEY.

4. UCR LEADERS WITH WHOM EMBASSY IN CONTACT CONTINUE TO
GIVE VIDELA AND VIOLA FULL CREDIT FOR SAVING SOLARI IRIGOYEN
AND AMAYA. ONE LEADER SPECULATED TO EMBOFF LAST NIGHT THAT
IF TWO MEN ARE IN FACT PLACED UNDER ARREST DURING NEXT FEW
DAYS, THAT MAY SUGGEST THAT VIDELA AND VIOLA GAVE "KIDNAPPERS"
ASSURANCES THAT IF TWO MEN WERE RELEASED UNHARMED, THEY WOULD
BE HELD AND INVESTIGATED FOR POSSIBLE SUBVERSIVE CONNECTIONS,
I.E. THAT IF THERE WERE ANY WRONGDOING ON THEIR PART, THAT
WOULD BE TAKEN CARE OF WITHIN THE LAW.

5. CLUMSY MANNER IN WHICH "RELEASE" WAS CARRIED OUT CONTINUES
TO BEMUSE POLITICAL OBSERVERS HERE. IN INTERVIEW IN MENDOZA
ON AUG 30 (BEFORE TWO WERE "RELEASED"), INTERIOR MINISTER
HARGUINDEGUY, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION FROM NEWSMAN CONCERNING
FATE OF TWO MEN, SAID HE HOPED TO HAVE GOOD NEWS ON SUBJECT
NEXT DAY. HE SAID FURTHER: "I HOPE THAT TOMORROW IN SAN JUAN
THE INTERIOR MINISTER CAN TELL YOU THAT MESSRS SOLARI IRIGOYEN
AND AMAYA ARE IN SUCH AND SUCH A PLACE, THAT THEY ARE UNDER
ARREST, THAT THEY ARE FREE OR THAT THEY HAVE APPEARED."

6. ONLY A FEW HOURS AFTER HARGUINDEGUY'S STATEMENT, WHICH
CLEARLY SUGGESTED IT WAS SECURITY FORCES (OR ELEMENTS THEREOF)
WHICH HAD TWO MEN IN CUSTODY, THEY WERE DUMPED AT CHECKPOINT
AFTER "SHOOT-OUT" WITH POLICE, AS REPORTED IN REFTEL.
HARGUINDEGUY STATEMENT OBVIOUSLY INCOMPATIBLE WITH THIS
EFFORT TO SUGGEST THE TWO MEN HAD BEEN HELD BY
THOSE OPPOSED TO POLICE RATHER THAN BY SECURITY FORCES THEMSELVES.
WITH SOME AMUSEMENT, OBSERVERS HERE ARE ASKING: "IF TWO WERE
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HELD BY BANDITS, HOW DID INTERIOR MINISTER KNOW THEY WERE
TO BE RELEASED BY NEXT DAY, AND WHY DID HE THINK THEY WERE
UNDER ARREST?"

7. WHILE FACT THAT HARGUINDEGUY HAS AGAIN PUT HIS FOOT IN MOUTH
MAY BE CAUSE FOR CERTAIN AMOUNT OF LEVITY, EXTENT TO
WHICH THIS CASE DEMONSTRATES INABILITY OF CENTRAL AUTHORITIES
TO CONTROL SUBORDINATES IN SECURITY FORCES IS OMINOUS

INDEED. SO FAR, OUTCOME OF THIS EPISODE APPEARS TO HAVE
BEEN SATISFACTORY, BUT AT GIVEN POINT NOT EVEN INTERVENTION
OF PRESIDENT SEEMED CERTAIN OF ASSURING THAT OUTCOME.
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